iii) The Ministry also implemented a new reform linked Central Sector Scheme on 20.10.2004 for Development/Strengthening of Marketing Infrastructure, Grading and Standardization. Under this scheme, assistance for development of agricultural marketing infrastructure projects will be provided in those States/UTs that amend the APMC Act on the lines suggested in the model law.

Launching National Horticulture Mission

1096. SHRI SUDARSHAN AKARAPU: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have launched "National Horticulture Mission";

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the time-frame within which the Mission would be launched?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) to (c) The Finance Minister in his Budget Speech for 2005-06, has announced the launching of the National Horticulture Mission by 1st April, 2005 and Rs. 630 crores has been proposed for 2005-06.

Rice intensification

1097. SHRI S.P.M. SYED KHAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the System of Rice Intensification (SRI) also called as Madagascar Method is practiced in the country; if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether Government have tested this method; if so, the details thereof;

(c) the conclusion of the research report by Government and whether this method can be used for improving better rice production; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) The System of Rice Intensification (SRI) was developed initially in Madagascar during 1980 and hence it is also called Madagascar System of Rice Intensification. SRI was introduced in Andhra Pradesh during kharif 2003 by Acharya N.G. Ranga Agricultural University, Hyderabad and State Government of Andhra Pradesh in the form of "On farm trials" on a small scale.

(b) to (d) The Indian Council of Agricultural Research has initiated testing the SRI method of cultivation through Frontline demonstrations and experimental trials at different locations under All India Coordinated Rice Improvement Project during 2004.

Encouraging herbal agriculture

†1098. SHRIMATI SAVITA SHARDA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have chalked out any programme to encourage herbal agriculture in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the likely increase in production as a result thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) The Department of Agriculture and Cooperation in the Ministry of Agriculture is implementing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Macro Management in Agriculture-Supplementation/ Complementation of State Efforts through Work Plan under which development of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants is one of the programmes. The National Medicinal Plants Board under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare is also providing assistance for encouraging herbal agriculture.

(c) Since no authentic information is available in the country about the production of medicinal plants, the likely increase in production as a result of the interventions has not been quantified.

Pulses production

1099. SHRI CHO. S. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the total production of various pulses in each State during the last three years;

(b) the total domestic consumption during that period;

(c) whether the production was self sufficient;

(d) if not, whether Government are importing the pulses to meet the domestic requirements; and

(e) if so, the total import of pulses both in quantity and value during the last three consecutive years?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.